

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-0905

August 18, 2005

The Honorable George W. Bush
The President
The White House
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear Mr. President:

Gasoline prices are through the roof. In fact, the Energy Information Administration has announced that every area of the country experienced an increase of at least 10 cents per gallon last week. In Palm Beach County, Florida, the price jumped 20 cents in the past seven days. These represent the highest one-week increases on record; and, there's no indication the accelerating prices will stabilize anytime soon.

As a result, consumers from Florida tell me they're having a hard time affording the drive to work, the grocery store and the doctor's office – especially working families and seniors on fixed incomes. Skyrocketing motor fuel prices also are a double-whammy for businesses – the rising cost of transporting goods is cutting into the bottom line and their customers have less to spend because they're breaking the budget on gas.

And while American consumers and businesses suffer, most of the major oil companies are reporting huge profits for the last quarter. That's why I urge you to take immediate action to help lower gas prices and ease the uncertainty of consumers.

Specifically, I think you should use the power of your office to seek a voluntary and temporary price freeze from the oil companies on wholesale fuel prices charged to distributors and dealers. The industry has done just that during past times of economic uncertainty.

I hope they'll respond positively to your call to step up to the plate once again for the sake of American consumers – and the overall health of our nation's economy.

Winning such a concession would bide time to hold in-depth federal investigations into whether any of the oil companies are fixing prices to boost profits. It also would provide an opportunity to look into other short-term solutions – such as examining the refining capacity in America – seeing that the recently enacted energy bill does almost nothing to decrease gas prices in the near future.

I look forward to hearing your views and plans on this important issue. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Bill Nelson". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Bill" and last name "Nelson" clearly legible.